**Cheat Sheet 2.2**



**Toilet Training**

Toilet training your puppy should be quite a simple process, as long as you take the time and trouble to get into a good routine and are consistent. If it feels infuriatingly repetitive, then you are probably doing it right!

Initially you are going to have to take your puppy out every single hour, and also at the following times:

* Immediately after waking up
* To urinate within fifteen minutes of eating, and defecate within half an hour of eating (although this might vary slightly with each individual, you will learn)
* When they have had a play
* When anyone comes in to greet the puppy
* When the puppy wakes up
* After anything exciting
* After anything boring
* Last thing at night

The Toilet Drill

Take the puppy out as dispassionately as possible, take him on a lead or carry him too. Place him on the ground a wait a few minutes, essentially ignoring him. If anything happens praise profusely, reward with treats, go ahead and have a mini Mardi Gras. This will show puppy he did good, and is more likely to do it again. Begin adding a verbal cue – “be quick” “do your business” or any other random choice!

At Night

Puppies generally don’t have enough bladder control to last the night, so it is likely you will have accidents at this time. You can speed up training by coming down once in the night, preventing accidents that actually slow down learning. Ensure this is not 3am playtime though!

General Tips

* Try keeping a separate lead and slip on garden shoes near the back door
* Take puppy to the same place each time
* Clean any accidents really, really well, as puppies will go where they’ve been before. Clean with a shop bought cleaner or I have heard good things about biological washing powder with enzymes. See Puppy Pad rant below! You can put a pad or what you used to clean up an accident in the spot you want the puppy to go to encourage this.
* Make the spot you want them to go realistic – lots of puppies only want to go on grass – get a piece of turf from Homebase, or perhaps Astroturf a patch.

A note on puppy pads:

As with many things, there are different approaches to lots of things in dog training. One thing I cannot understand though, is the point of Puppy Pads. All they do is teach a puppy it ok to pee and poop in the house, and they then must unlearn this as well as learn where they are supposed to go. In my experience, almost all owners that need help with toilet training have used them, so this just reinforces the point to me every time. Do yourself a favour, get rid of them totally, today, and spend a few days to a week of hard work on this routine – you’ll be pleased you did!

Common errors

* Over-feeding - an unsuitable diet or giving a variety of foods.
* Not feeding at regular times
* Punishing the puppy for its indoor accidents (which can make it scared of toileting in front of you - even outside).
* Using ammonia based cleaning compounds (which smell similar to urine).
* Expecting the puppy to tell you when it needs to go out; this is unrealistic, so it is better to take them out at regular intervals.
* Leaving the back door open for the puppy to come and go as it pleases (a puppy will think that the garden is an adventure playground, rather than a toilet area. Also, what is a puppy meant to do when the weather gets cold, and it is faced with a closed back door?).
* Leaving the puppy on its own too long, so that it is forced to go indoors (which sets a bad precedent, or even a habit of going indoors).
* Mistakenly associating the words 'good girl' or 'good boy' when they toilet, as opposed to the specific cue words. Guess what could happen the next time you praise your dog?
* Access to rugs or carpet (which are nice and absorbent - just like grass).
* Laziness on your part, resulting in more wees indoors than outdoors.
* Leaving the puppy alone in the garden, so you are not there to reward it for going outdoors.
* Submissive or excited urination on greeting (if this occurs, take your puppy outside before you greet it and tone down your greeting so it is less exciting or overwhelming).

Toileting on a walk

It’s a common frustration that your little darling will not toilet when out on a walk, yet relieves itself the second it gets back home. This is because the puppy has been taught to toilet only at home (hopefully in its garden), and being creatures of habit, they often wait until they have returned home before evacuating their bladder and/ or bowels.

To break this habit, you will have to get up very early one morning (when you have plenty of time), and get your puppy out on a walk before it has had its morning wee. You should not bring it home until it has been forced to go out of desperation. If however, you are unsuccessful, and your puppy has not toileted, then take it immediately into the garden on your return, or you risk it relieving itself indoors.﻿

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